

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-07 AID-05 OMB-01 BOOK-050

(ISO) W

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R 041400Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3997

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR AG FR

SUBJECT: MITTERAND VISIT TO ALGERIA

REF: PARIS 6155

1. LENGTHY JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY FLN AND FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY FOLLOWING MITTERAND VISIT HERE FEB 24-28 RECITED EXPECTED PLATITUDES ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND FRENCH-ALGERIAN RELATIONS. ON SAHARA, TWO SIDES CONDEMNED MOROCCAN AGGRESSION, AGREED THAT MILITARY INTERVENTION SHOULD CEASE, AND CALLED FOR EFFECTIVE UN GUARANTEE TO ENABLE SAHRAOUI TO DETERMINE THEIR FATE FREELY. ON FRENCH-ALGERIAN RELATIONS, COMMUNIQUE CALLED FOR PRESENT UNSATISFACTORY SITUATION TO BE CHANGED SO THAT COOPERATION SHOULD BE ON EQUAL FOOTING. TWO SIDES DEPLORED RAISM AGAINST MAGHREB PEOPLES AND CALLED FOR EFFECTIVE GUARANTEES OF SECURITY OF ALGERIAN WORKERS IN FRANCE. MIGRANT WORKERS, COMMUNIQUE STATED, SHOULD ENJOY ALL SOCIAL AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS.

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2. FRENCH EMBASSY HAS PROVIDED US WITH INFORMATION RE VISIT:

A. FINAL COMMUNIQUE: ALTHOUGH COMMUNIQUE DELAYED ONE DAY TO ALLOW FOR HAGGLING OVER MIDDLE EAST PROTION, COMMUNIQUE DID REPRESENT FORMAL AGREED UPON AND APPROVED STATEMENT.

B. POLISARIO PRISONERS: MITTERRAND HOPED TO BE ABLE TO AFFECT RELEASE OF TWO FRENCH COOPERANTS, PIERRE SEGURO AND JEAN-PAUL DIEF, CAPTURED BY POLISARIO IN JANUARY. FLN INITIALLY THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE BUT THEN SAID THAT POLISARIO HAD REFUSED TO HAND MEN OVER, PREFERRING TO RELEASE THEM TO FRENCH GOVT. REPRESENTATIVE SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE ALGERIA. MITTERRAND SAID TO HAVE BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTED AS HE REGARDED THIS AS POTENTIAL IMPORTANT RESULT OF TRIP.

C. MITTERRAND AND FRENCH EMBASSY: SINCE MITTERRAND HAD NOT CONTACTED FRENCH GOVT PRIOR TO COMING HERE, EMBASSY CONFINED ITSELF TO SENDING ITS MINISTER COUNSELOR TO AIRPORT TO GREET HIM ON ARRIVAL. MITTERRAND EXPRESSED PLEASURE AND SURPRISE AT GESTURE, AND SUBSEQUENTLY HE AND HIS DELEGATION HAD PLEASANT EXCHANGE OVER DRINKS AT EMBASSY WITH AMBASSADOR AND STAFF. RELATIONS HAD WARMED SUFFICIENTLY BY CLOSE OF VISIT THAT AMBASSADOR SAW MITTERRAND OFF AT AIRPORT. FRENCH EMBASSY PERSONNEL NOT INVITED TO ANY FUNCTION, HOWEVER.

D. POLISARIO CONTACT: MITTERRAND'S MUCH PUBLICIZED MEETING WITH POLISARIO WAS BRIEF ENCOUNTER DURING RECEPTION AT HOTEL WHERE HE STAYING. (WE NOTE THAT, IF ENCOUNTER BRIEF, IT ALSO CAREFULLY PLANNED BY ALGERIANS SINCE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS VIDEOTAPED FOR LATER USE ON TV.)

E. DELEGATION REPRESENTATIVES, ONE OF WHOM FRIEND OF FRENCH MINISTER COUNSELOR HERE, ASSURED FRENCH EMBASSY THEY WOULD ACT "RESPONSIBLY;" ACCORDING THIS SOURCE, DELEGATION WILLING GIVE IN ON SAHRAOUI POINTS IN ORDER TO EASE ALGERIAN PRESSURE FOR EXTREME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATEMENTS ON MIDDLE EAST.

F. FRENCH EMBASSY HERE SATISFIED WITH TONE AND SUBSTANCE OF VISIT.

3. COMMENT: VISIT SEEMS TO HAVE GONE WELL FROM ALGERIAN POINT OF VIEW. MEDIA OBVIOUSLY USED MITTERRAND'S PRESENCE AS PED FOR ARTICLES STRESSING

GOOD RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN FRENCH AND ALGERIAN PEOPLES AND POLITICAL PARTIES, AS DISTINCT FROM GOVERNMENTS. MITTERAND IS MOST IMPORTANT EUROPEAN POLITICIAN TO HAVE MET WITH POLISARIO AND COME OUT IN FAVOR OF SAHARAN SELF-DETERMINATION. (ITALIAN CP CHIEF BERLINGUER APPARENTLY DID NOT SEE POLISARIO REPS DURING HIS VISIT LAST NOVEMBER.) THIS IN ITSELF MAKES VISIT A PLUS FROM ALGERIAN POINT OF VIEW.

4. WE DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT MITTERAND'S STAY HERE WILL DO MUCH TO ALTER COURSE OF FRENCH-ALGERIAN RELATIONS. IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY PROPAGANDA EXERCISE AND EVEN SMALL POLITICAL PLUM WHICH RELEASE OF PRISONERS WOULD HAVE REPRESENTED TO MITTERAND WAS DENIED HIM.

5. POLISARIO'S ALLEGED REFUSAL TO HAND OVER PRISONERS AFTER FLN'S AGREEMENT TO DO SO RAISES QUESTION ABOUT DEGREE OF ALGERIAN CONTROL OVER GUERRILLAS. FRENCH WONDERING ABOUT THIS AS WELL. UNTIL NOW OUR GUESS HAS BEEN THAT SOME ALGERIAN ORGANIZATION, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY FLN, KEPT PRETTY TIGHT REIN ON POLISARIO. MAY BE THAT GROUP, OR AT LEAST ITS MILITARY WING IN DESERT, HAS MORE INDEPENDENCE THAN WE THOUGHT. ON OTHER HAND, WHOLE EXERCISE MAY HAVE BEEN DESIGNED PRECISELY TO FURTHER THIS IDEA AND PROVIDE COVER FOR ALGERIAN RELUCTANCE TO TURN OVER PRISONERS TO MITTERLAND. ON BALANCE WE LEAN TO LATTER THEORY. LYNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL LEADERS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ALGIER00584
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760084-1003
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760397/aaaadhj.tel
Line Count: 143
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PARIS 6155
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <20 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MITTERRAND VISIT TO ALGERIA
TAGS: PFOR, AG, FR, (MITTERRAND, FRANCOIS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006